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MINISTER PRENTICE NAMES CHAIRPERSON AND NEW MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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OTTAWA, ON (April 26, 2007) - The Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today announced the appointment of Chief Clarence Louie of British Columbia, as the Chairperson of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board.

"There is no Aboriginal leader in Canada today who is better known for his commitment to Aboriginal economic development," noted Minister Prentice. "From his own experience as Chief of the Osoyoos Indian Band, and as a visionary for the economic potential of all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, Clarence Louie is exceptionally qualified to guide the work of the Board in its forward agenda," Minister Prentice said.

Elected Chief eleven times since 1985, Clarence Louie founded the Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation in 1998, and serves as its President and Chief Executive Officer. The Band manages ten business ventures and administers its own health, social, educational and municipal services. Chief Louie has received many honours recognizing his leadership and the successful efforts of his community.

At the same time, Minister Prentice announced appointments of Nellie Cournoyea (Northwest Territories), and Chief Jim Boucher (Alberta), who will serve as Vice-Chairpersons of the Board. Other new members announced are Chief Victor Buffalo (Alberta); Grand Chief Matthew Mukash (Quebec), and Dale Booth (Ontario). The appointments take effect immediately and continue for three years.

"This is an outstanding group of individuals whose experience and achievement in business, community development, public service, finance, and other fields, allow us to create a renewed and re-energized National Board. I look forward to working with Chief Louie and his colleagues to pursue economic development measures that will benefit all Aboriginal peoples, and Canada as a whole," said Minister Prentice. "At the same time, I would like to thank Rosa Walker, who served as Interim Chairperson of the Board over recent months, and the other members whose terms have expired, for their dedication and efforts on behalf of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

The National Aboriginal Economic Development Board is mandated by federal Cabinet, and members are appointed by Order-in-Council. The Board's role is to advise Ministers on policy, programming, and program coordination matters related to Aboriginal economic development.

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Biographical Notes - Appointments to National Aboriginal Economic Development Board

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Biographical Notes - Appointments to National Aboriginal Economic Development Board

Chairperson and Members

Chief Clarence Louie, Osoyoos, British Columbia (Chairperson)

Clarence Louie is the Chief of the Osoyoos Indian Band, located in the Okanagan Region of British Columbia, and serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation. He sits on a number of Boards and Committees, and he has been a member of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board since 2001. Chief Louie is a frequent speaker on the priority of individual and community self-sufficiency; his views have been widely reported in national and international media.

Recently awarded the "Order of British Columbia" for service and contribution to the people of B.C., Chief Louie has received numerous awards in recognition of leadership and results in fostering business and economic development. These include the Aboriginal Business Leader Award for All Nations Trust and Development Corporation (1999), the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers' "Economic Developer of the Year" Award (2000), and the National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Business and Community Development (2004).

Chief Louie studied business administration at Okanagan College, and Native American studies at both the University of Lethbridge (Alberta) and the Saskatchewan Indian Federation College.

Ms. Nellie Cournoyea; Inuvik, Northwest Territories (Vice-Chairperson)

Nellie Cournoyea is the Chair/CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation which manages $267 million in assets involving the lands and financial compensation resulting from the 1984 land claim settlement.

Previous to this, Ms. Cournoyea was Premier of the Northwest Territories (1991-1995), and represented the Western Arctic riding of Nunakput (1979-1995). During this time, she held a number of portfolios, including responsibility for the Territories Power Corporation, Renewable Resources, Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Public Works and Highways, and others.

Born in Aklavik, Northwest Territories, Ms. Cournoyea was educated through distance-learning programs, then worked for CBC Inuvik as an announcer and station manager. She was a land claim fieldworker for the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and a founding member, administrator and land rights worker of the Committee of Original Peoples' Entitlement.

Ms. Cournoyea was the first managing director of the Inuvialuit Development Corporation, implementation coordinator for the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, and served on the Board of Directors of the Inuvialuit Petroleum Arbitration Board. She is a founding member of the Northern Games Society and serves in volunteer capacities supporting community, historical, and cultural activities.

Chief Jim Boucher, Fort McKay, Alberta (Vice-Chairperson)

Chief Jim Boucher is Chairman of the Board of the Fort McKay Group of Companies (FMGC), 100-percent owned and controlled by the Fort McKay First Nation of Alberta, and involved in a number of joint ventures. Under Chief Boucher's vision and leadership, the FMGC has grown into one of the most successful First-Nation-owned commercial enterprises in Canada, with annual revenues of more than $50 million.

In 1998, following the announcement of plans to develop the Athabasca oil sands, Chief Boucher directed the formation of the Fort McKay Industry Relation Corporation, whose mandate was to build relationships with industry so that Fort McKay would benefit from these developments.

Chief Boucher helped to establish the Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) in 1988 to represent the collective interests of the region's five First Nations. This eventually led to the multi-sectoral Athabasca Tribal Council All Parties Core Agreement - a partnership among the five First Nations, the federal, provincial and municipal governments, and more than 20 industrial developers. He has served as Chair of the Athabasca Tribal Council for 11 years, was a founder of the Treaty 8 First Nation of Alberta, for which he sat on the Executive Board of Chiefs, and was Grand Chief from 1999 to 2001.

Chief Boucher served on the Board of Governors of Fort McMurray's Keyano College, and was its Vice-Chairman for two years. On environmental matters, he served on the Alberta Pacific Environmental Review Board, and since 2002, he has been a member of the Shell Climate Change Advisory Panel.

Chief Victor Buffalo, Hobbema, Alberta (Member)

Victor Buffalo is the Chief of the Samson Cree Nation, a position he has held for five terms, and is a recognized leader in the field of business capital and Aboriginal financial institutional development. He was instrumental in founding Peace Hills Trust Company, Canada's first and largest Aboriginally-owned national financial institution; it has now been in operation for more than 26 years.

With a strong focus on business and economic development, Chief Buffalo has led the development of sustainable ventures for the Samson Cree Nation, including Peace Hills Trust, Peace Hills General Insurance, Samson Lake Louise Mall, and a number of on-reserve commercial enterprises. Chief Buffalo is Chairman of Akuna Drilling Trust, and sits on a number of Boards of Directors, including Western Lakota Energy Services, a publicly traded oil and gas drilling contractor, and the national Aboriginal Diabetes Association. He is a trustee of the Samson Education Trust Fund.

Chief Buffalo holds a diploma in Chemical Technology from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, and continued post-secondary studies at the Maskwachees Cultural College located on the Samson reserve. In 2005, he was awarded the Alberta Centennial Medal which recognizes individuals who have made a significant contribution to society. In 2006, he was inducted into the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business '*Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame*'.

Mr. Dale Booth, Ottawa, Ontario (Member)

Dale Booth has more than 15 years of experience in the field of Aboriginal economic and community development. He has also held senior positions in the Assembly of First Nations as the Chief Executive Officer, and Director of Economic Development where he demonstrated particular abilities in the areas of strategic planning, and operational and financial management.

Spending part of his career in the federal Public Service, Mr. Booth worked in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development where he developed a successful Private/Public Partnership approach that was used in the process for building infrastructure in First Nations communities.

He is currently a senior consultant with P3 Advisors Inc., where he specializes in First Nations business, economic development and infrastructure. He also lectures on the Public/Private Partnership Model.

Grand Chief Matthew Mukash; Kuujjuarapik, Quebec (Member)

Elected Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees in 2006, Matthew Mukash has a long history of work and advocacy for Cree rights and ties to the land. He gained national and international recognition in the early 1990s through coordinating the opposition to the Great Whale River Campaign, and leading the initiative which raised international support and awareness of Cree concerns through an historic canoe trip from Whapmagoostui to New York City.

In a career of public service, he has been a police officer, member of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, the Cree Board of Compensation, community representative to the Grand Council of the Crees, Cree Regional Authority, Deputy Grand Chief, and Chief of Whapmagoostui (1992-1999).

Raised on the land in a traditional way of life into his teens, Grand Chief Mukash later pursued more formal education and attained a Degree in Political Science. Drawing on the knowledge from academic life as well as traditional teachings and values, he holds a vision for Aboriginal people that is founded on a strong governance structure and sustainable economy.

Biographical notes on continuing Board Members *(external link, opens a new window)*

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